

rights, came haltingly into the room, in front of Alice. She was white as paper. She put out her hand to support herself from falling, weakly groping for a chair nearby, as her eyes remained fixed on the Count. "Valgame Dios!" breathed the suddenly wailed Fiaschi. "Por honor de Dios y todos los santos!"

"It is my right to come!" cried his trembling wife, by way of meeting the blazing anger, shame, and accusation flaring in his gaze. "Forgive me, José! It is my love—I could not bear to let you go!" She went down abruptly on her knees at his feet and clasped him wildly by the legs. "God help me if I love you so," she added; "for I was sure I had my love from God!"

"Oh, Thurley," said Alice quietly, "may I see you for a moment?"

Thurley turned to the Count, who remained there, livid and helplessly staring at his wife. "You will excuse me, I am sure, if I say good evening."

But the Count had been stricken deaf and dumb as well as pallid and blind. He made no reply as Thurley and Alice quitted the room and left him fully answered.

Later they heard the closing of the door that led to the outside world. A servant came to announce, in accordance with directions, that the Count and the Countess were gone. The evening had fairly begun!

To be concluded next Sunday

THE ICONOCLAST

Continued from page 9

his heels. It has been caged without food since they landed it at Brundisium."

THE patrician considered for a moment. He had always been a father to his servants. It was hateful to him to think of any injury befalling them. Perhaps even now, if this strange masterful fanatic would show his sorrow for what he had done, it might be possible to spare him. At least it was worth trying.

"Your offense deserves death," said he. "What reasons can you give why it should not befall you, since you have injured this statue, which is worth your own price a hundred times over?"

The slave looked steadfastly at his master, and a great dignity came over the unkempt, disheveled figure. "I do not fear death," he said. "My sister Candida died in the arena, and I am ready to do the same. It is true that I have injured your statue; but I am able to find you something of far greater value in exchange. I will give you the truth and the gospel in exchange for your broken idol."

The Emperor laughed. "You will do nothing with him, Emilius," he said. "I know his breed of old. He is ready to die—he says so himself. Why save him, then?"

But the patrician still hesitated. He would make a last effort. "Throw off his bonds," he said to the guards. "Take the *furca* from his neck. So! Now, Datus, I have released you to show that I trust you. I have no wish to do you any hurt if you will but acknowledge your error and so set a better example to my household here assembled."

"How then shall I acknowledge my error?" the slave asked.

"Bow your head before the goddess and entreat her forgiveness for the violence you have done her. Then perhaps you may gain my pardon as well."

"Put me then before her," said the Christian.

Emilius Flaccus looked triumphantly at Domitian. By kindness and tact he was effecting that which the Emperor had failed to do by violence. Datus walked in front of the mutilated Venus. Then, with a sudden spring, he tore the baton out of the hand of one of his guardians, leaped upon the pedestal, and showered his blows upon the lovely marble woman. With a crack and a dull thud her right arm dropped to the ground. Another fierce blow, and the left had followed. Flaccus danced and screamed with horror, while his servants dragged the raving iconoclast from his impulsive victim. Domitian's brutal laughter echoed through the hall.

"Well, friend, what think you now?" he cried. "Are you wiser than your Emperor? Can you indeed tame your Christian with kindness?"

Emilius Flaccus wiped the sweat from his brow. "He is yours, great Cæsar. Do with him as you will."

"Let him be at the gladiators' entrance of the Circus an hour before the games begin," said the Emperor. "Now, Emilius, the night has been a merry one. My Ligurian galley waits by the river quay. Come, cool your head with a spin to Ostia ere the business of State calls you to the Senate."

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